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Decline of the Art of Pottery among the Chiriguano

323 198 415 Of all the Chiriguano industries the most threatened one is doubtless ceramics. The Chiriguano can claim the glory of having been until recently the last Indians of South America /Fig. 64 appears here/ to have a pottery which deserved to be included in the number of beautiful manifestations of this art, so brilliantly represented in certain regions of the continent. Today things have changed a great deal. Villages in which one can still find women capable of decorating vessels with the mastery of former days have become rare and are limited 415 126 198 to a restricted area. /394/ It was in the tolderías of the Timboy, the Great Salado and the Little Salado, in the region of Yumbía and in the Iglembé valley (upper Pilcomayo, departments of Tarija and Chuquisaca) that I was able to collect the finest specimens in my collection. Elsewhere it was exceptional /Fig. 65 appears here/ /see p. 166/ to be lucky enough to lay my hands on a fine piece: and, if I did have this luck several times, it was almost always a question of an old vessel preserved as if by a miracle. The Franciscan missions which [199] formerly gave Nordenskiöld and Holmberg such fine specimens 199 contributed less toward enriching my collections. Nothing ex- 323 presses the sad state of decline of the Chiriguano better than 415 what I /395/ could observe in the Machareti mission. After 198 going through nearly all the huts of this large village, which in [162] normal times has close to 2,000 inhabitants, I could scarcely acquire five or six yambuí having some artistic value. There [463] were no longer more than three or four women who still knew how to hold a brush and they had to /Fig. 66 appears here/ /see p. 167/ provide for almost the whole village. In a few years the ancient painted pottery will exist only in memory in the large village where the famous "Captain" Mandepona lived.

323 415 198 177 This decline has several causes. The first is the state of profound demoralization in which the Chiriguano are found, the total disorganization of their social life, and the increasing influence of the white men, followed by its corruptive effects: finally, the introduction of manufactured products, first and foremost gasoline cans.

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first and foremost gasoline cans. Artistic ceramics have become the appanage of a few old women who are not founding a school and who

Fig. 64. Fabrication of a large vat: the roll of clay is placed on the preceding one and flattened between the thumb and the other fingers of the potter. Finger impressions result from this, forming a crude design.

will carry the secret of their art to the grave. Already today, obliged to satisfy a large demand, they endlessly repeat the same motifs and have a vexing tendency to draw them hastily and without any care at all. These designs are becoming awkward, crude, and are taking on a primitive appearance which is far from corresponding to the taste and culture of the Chiriguano.

1: Métraux--166 E-5 (1929) 1930 SF10 Chiriguano SF10

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Fig. 65. Fabrication of a large vat: the potter impresses her thumbnail into the still soft clay to obtain a regular design.

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In some villages there are no more potters. The inhabitants of the toldería of Ibopeytí, for example, have to import the painted vessels they need to celebrate festivals. When I wanted to acquire them, it was generally objected that they had been bought and often at a very high price. "You go away and leave us without vessels," they often used to say to me as a half-joking, half-sad good-by after my raids.

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/476 cont./ became an ingeniously conceived tool or still oftener a musical instrument. Asensio used to make violins which on first sight appeared to have come from a European factory. It goes without saying that he was the recognized carpenter of the village and the great provider of household articles. When Asensio had understood the purpose which had brought me to his home, he transformed his hut into a workshop for ethnographic objects: and I owe it to his enterprising spirit that I was able to collect many a piece, today no longer in use, which he reconstructed for me.

At the time when I was in his village, Asensio had received big orders for flutes for the coming Easter festival, [532] and I had a good time watching him work. Once an instrument was finished, he would embellish it with engraved animals.

115 126 532 The material on which Asensio (see Plate XCI /see p.355/. 5, 7,. and Plate XCII /see p.356 /. 3, 6) incised his figures exerted an indirect influence on the pencil drawings he drew in my notebook. They stand out by their angular character, but also by their clearness.

José Miguel (see Plate XCI. 8; Plate XCII. 1, 5, 7, 9; Plate XCIII /see p. 357 /. 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12), whom Asensio's example had encouraged, asked me to give him the notebook and pencil, and he made me a whole series of drawings which, although rather light and uncertain, sometimes are not lacking [197] in a certain movement. José Miguel had traveled to Argentina: the train and the automobile (which he drew from memory) attest well to his admiration for the /477/ marvels of "Progress" (Plate XCII. 7, 8). Thank God his modernism had not made him forget his mythology, and he was able to draw for me a mythical episode which is to be seen on Plate XCIII. 12, A, B, C: the blue jaguar (yaguarowi, personification of the spots on the moon) is preparing to devour the moon and the sun.

123 126 532 When I had finished with the men, I wanted to have several feminine drawings, imagining that the women would lend themselves willingly to this game since they are the recognized artists of the tribe. All, unanimously and to my great surprise, refused to do it, shouting in the middle of gales of laughter: Aikuaá "I can't do it, I don't know how."

4: Mino--133 M-3 (1893-1911) 1912 SF19 Chiriguano SF19

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631 645 If this were the case, the boundaries of the new canton should be the following, according to the agreement made by the Representación Chuquisaqueña /from Chuquisaca/: on the south the left bank of the stream Yitiacua, on the north the parallel of the stream of Cuevo, on the east the range of Aguaragüe up to said parallel, on the west the ranges of Saararenta and Iyenta, and on the southwest the stream of Chimbe.

FM92 162 Within this delimitation are included several Chiriguano towns, the most populous being the missions of Santa Rosa, with more than 1,200 inhabitants, and that of San Buenaventura de Ivu with 657 souls.

White families are few, but not less than 40, which could give a total of at least 160 souls. It might be that with time this small population will grow in the new canton, as that of Cuevo grew.

799 129 463 648 Years are needed for the Chiriguano Indian to be able to take over the political government of a town, in spite of the fact that in the relatively new missions there are musicians, carpenters, woodworkers, masons, saddlers, shoemakers, tailors, and young men who know how to write well and to read better, but it is one thing to know an art or a trade and quite another one to have to administer justice.

/95/ The experience of many years of missionary life and what I have seen in the missions abandoned since the war of Independence justifies my opinion that many years are needed for the Chiriguano Indians to be able to fill certain public offices such as that of corregidor and parish alcalde.

A Project

CBB The eastern zone, which today belongs to the three departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija, and Sucre, is somewhat threatened by foreign countries, but it might be that the Bolivian Republic could make friendly settlements with the neighboring nations.

4: Nino--263 M-3 (1908-1911) 1912 4P10 Chiriguano 1910

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292 [562] make people laugh at the carnival. The same thing can be said of other antiquities. I have placed in this chapter the method for making it, as well as the one for the hat, because it is work from which only the man benefits and both are counted among his garments.

Conveniences

•463 In the course of the previous pages it has been seen that the Chiriguano is hunter, warrior, and also sorcerer. The first and second categories contain many, and the third one fewer, and this is easily understood, because a knowledge of medicinal herbs is needed and, more than this, the art of knowing how to deceive with prattling, which is not for all.

463 291 415 The three classes wear a belt with a bag which hangs from it. The belt is called "Bosa," doubtless because it has a bolsa /bag/. In this those of the first and second category put tobacco, maize husks, and flint, tinder, and steel for making fire, and sorcerers add to these things the implements of their profession, which /192/ are the Mbaecagüe, a piece of bone, the Itarapúa, a round stone, both of which are necessary for the cures... miraculous ones (1).

[199] 1. The Bosa does not seem to be of Chiriguano origin. Andueri doubts that it was introduced by the Argentinians or by the Tarijeños /people of Tarija/, but it seems to me that it was the former who introduced it, because it is similar to the one used by the gaucho.

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868 to his mother with satisfaction and then tells his companions about it.

/220/ There are also men who teach boys the way to be quick in fights and even the way to dodge enemy arrows, as well as bullets. The man who teaches this is called Puruncanise, or man who scratches. He is the terror of the boys in the town where he lives. The method he uses is to run after the boys, and woe to the one who out of weakness or carelessness lets himself be caught! In the hands of the puruncanise he suffers the martyrdom of being scratched all over his body with long fingernails, which he lets grow on purpose, in addition to the blame he gets for letting himself be caught by an old man. In a second race it is not likely that the boy being taught will let himself be caught (1).

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1. Those who are older have the calf of the leg scratched with the tooth of the Acuti /agouti/ by another of the art. A lot of blood comes out of this, and upon recovering, they say that they are very good at running and can resist fatigue much more than those who did not allow themselves to be scratched.

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882 When all the boys of the tribe have received practical lessons from such a neighbor, they indeed may be ready for war, because skill consists in knowing how to shoot in order to injure and also how to dodge the enemy arrow. The Indians who know such strategy are called Queremba by their companions.

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721 726 797 In the last war of Curuyuqui, the Indians attacked the Santa Rosa Mission while Colonel don Tomás Frías was there. He chose as a target an Indian Queremba who seemed to be the chief of the company and lost some eight or ten bullets without having the pleasure of felling him. Almost all the Indians learn this way of fighting; hence their combats do not last long. That of Curuyuqui lasted eight hours because they were sheltered in trenches.